

Remarks

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. By this Response, claims 4 and 5 have been canceled. Therefore, claims 1-3 and 6 are presented to the Examiner for consideration.

The Examiner has objected to the specification for lack of a drawing showing the steps in the claimed method. Applicants submit herewith a substitute drawing of a flow chart enumerating the steps of the method of the subject invention. Applicants state that no new matter is submitted with drawing and acceptance of the drawing is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter. The Office Action states the claimed method merely manipulates an abstract idea. The subject invention involves a method of conducting a competition that provides all participants a fair playing field and offers each participant an equal chance to win. The subject method eliminates the need for subjective and complicated handicapping systems yet allows all participants, no matter their ability, to compete for prizes equally.

The subject method was developed to address the current inequities in rating team ropers for competition. Team roping has been a main event at rodeos for years. One skilled in the art knows that, in team roping, two contestants rope a steer and win prizes based upon the fastest time. The first member of the team is called the header and he/she must rope the steer either by the head, horns, or neck. The second member of the team is called the heeler and he must rope the hind legs of the steer and bring the animal to a stop as both the header and heeler face the steer.

Team roping competitions gained immense popularity in the 1960's and 1970's at local jackpot competitions where team roping was the only event. At that time, all levels of ropers roped against each other whether they were beginners or professional competitors. Because the same teams would win at the majority of events, many ropers became discouraged and the sport declined in popularity in the 1980's.

Then in the 1990's, the USTRC (United States Team Roping Championships) developed a classification system to limit the margin of error in setting roping categories. Each roper is classified or rated with a number 1 through 10, according to his or her ability to rope. No roper is numbered

higher than 10. The classification number is the roper's ability rating as judged by fellow ropers and/or performance based.

In addition to these categories based upon numbers, each roper is tracked according to the roper's performance profile. The system is data driven and all ropers are reclassified on the basis of these data. Data are gathered for each roper from team ropings all across the country and compiled into "Roper Performance Profiles." These Profiles consist of factors such as money won versus money spent (how often a roper enters and how much they typically enter for), who a roper ropes with, how fast they rope, the roper's consistency, where a roper ropes and what other ropers think. Through a complex system of weights and standards developed over years of compiling roping data, each factor is analyzed in such a way that allows for an enhanced evaluation of each roper's ability. The purpose of the classification system is to provide for ropers a handicap system, which will allow them the opportunity to compete throughout the country against those of similar skills.

Further, the USTRC uses caps to prevent higher number ropers from roping in an event and a floor to prevent lower number ropers from attempting to rope against better ropers. The use of a "cap," i.e., capping a roping in an effort to eliminate participation of higher classified ropers, and a "floor," i.e., establishing a minimum handicap requirement for ropers entering any specific division further defines the caliber of ropers that are eligible to compete in a given roping. Problems with the present system arose however when 83 percent of all team ropers in the United States were numbered either a 1, 2, or 3. Because of this large concentration of numbers at the lower end of the spectrum, stock contractors who put on jackpots soon started to conduct ropings for these lower groups and higher numbered ropers were penalized as there would be few contestants in their events and thus low prize moneys plus many ropings actually refused to allow higher numbered contestants to compete. Thus, team roping became one of the only sports in the United States that actually penalized competitors who were rising to a higher level of proficiency instead of rewarding them.

The subject method conducts a roping event that provides a fair playing field for all competitors. The method negates the need for pre-determined and often arbitrary systems of handicapping and rating competitors yet allows competitors of all abilities to compete with an equal

chance of winning. Although the subject method is described in a preferred embodiment for conducting a team roping event, it is suitable for any sporting event that ranks winners based upon either times or scores. It can be easily adapted for either single competitions or for team competitions. The system simply rank orders all times/scores from fastest to slowest or highest to lowest. The number of categories are based upon the total number of contestants.

The subject invention is a method of conducting a competition, preferably a team roping event. The disclosed method is a unique way to conduct such an event. Several events have been conducted in the Pacific Northwest the last two years and each event has enjoyed great popularity. Everyone has an equal chance to be a winner. The subject method is applied to tangible subject matter, the components of a team roping competition, to achieve a successful result, an event where competitors are fairly awarded for participating. Applicants submit the subject method is patentable subject matter and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of its rejection.

In view of the foregoing remarks and the amendments to the claims, applicants believe that the claims are now in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants invite the Examiner to call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any of this response, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,



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